DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 241 729 CE 038 476

AUTHOR House, Richard M.
TITLE Standards of Practice in Continuing Education: A Status Study. Research Report: CCEU Project for the Development of Standards and Criteria for Good Practice in Continuing Education.
INSTITUTION Council on the Continuing Education Unit, Silver Spring, Md.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 52p.; For a related document, see CE 038 477.
AVAILABLE FROM Council on the Continuing Education Unit, 13000 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Attitude Measures; *Attitudes; *Continuing Education; *Criteria; *Educational Principles; Educational Research; Program Effectiveness; Quality Control

ABSTRACT

A major purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes toward standards of practice and the nature and scope of standards of practice as they currently exist in governmental agencies, professional associations and licensing agencies, business and industry, health-related organizations, and colleges and universities. A second purpose was to recommend a framework for the development of standards of practice for the field of continuing education. Data were collected by a mail survey of 5000 organizations and institutions; 702 completed the survey in a usable manner. Only 29 percent of survey respondents reported they routinely use written standards of practice in continuing education. A high number (84 percent) indicated agreement with the assertion that standards of practice enhance quality assurance. Few organizations (28 percent) reported being satisfied with current standards of practice in continuing education. Overall, 79 percent wanted more emphasis in standards on learner performance, while 77 percent also desired more emphasis in standards on educational process. Elements most frequently addressed in standards of practice currently used included administration and organization, goals and objectives, instructional staff, program/course records, program planning, fiscal resources, and program/course evaluation. (In addition to recommendations, a frame of reference for developing standards is provided.) (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED241729

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K Clancy

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PROJECT PERSONNEL

The Steering Committee

John R. Valley, Chairman
Area Director
Educational Testing Service

Hilton L. Bonniwell
Dean of Extension
Mississippi State University

[illegible] R. Reyes-Guerra
[illegible]cutive Director
Accreditation Board for Engineering
and Technology, Inc.

Charles J. Sener
Director
Bell System Center for Technical Education
American Telephone and Telegraph Company

The Review Panel

Alvin P. Lierheimer
Assistant Commissioner for Higher
Education Services
New York State Department of Education

Linda Rublee
Bell System Center for Technical Education
American Telephone and Telegraph Company

Ernest J. Nagler
Personnel Development Director
State of Connecticut

J. Rhodes Haverty, Dean
School of Allied Health
Georgia State University

Theodore J. Settle
Director, Management Education
NCR Corporation

Malcomb Knowles
Professor Emeritus, Adult Education
North Carolina State University

Richard C. McCullough
Vice President of Professional Development
American Society for Training and
Development, Incorporated

Locklann B. Dey, Director
CPE Course Development
American Institute of Certified Public
Accountants

The Writing Task Force

Perry Adams
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
and Planning
Virginia Community College System

Robert M. Anderson, Jr.
Manager
Technical Education Operations
Corporate Engineering and Manufacturing
General Electric Corporation

Marvin Cook
Professor of Education
University of Maryland

Ray Giemza
Management Development Specialist
Carolina Power and Light Company

Dean E. Griffith
Engineering Technical Training
Mobil Corporation

Barbara Hammonds
Director
Continuing Education Program
American Psychological Association

John P. Klus
Professor
Engineering and Applied Science
University of Wisconsin - Extension

Leonard S. Stein
Illinois Medical Association

Kay Stephenson
Director
Management Training
Carolina Power and Light Company

The Project Staff

Grover J. Andrews
Project Principal Investigator
North Carolina State University

Louis E. Phillips
Co-Investigator of Project
University of Georgia

Richard M. House
Director of Research for Project
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE IN CONTINUING EDUCATION: A STATUS STUDY

Richard M. House
Director of Continuing Education
University of North Carolina
School of Public Health

RESEARCH REPORT:
CCEU Project for the Development of
Standards and Criteria for Good Practice in
Continuing Education

1983
Council on the Continuing Education Unit
13000 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

$5.00

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit is a non-profit federation of educational and training organizations and individuals devoted to the constructive and consistent use of the Continuing Education Unit and to improvement of the quality and effectiveness of continuing education, training and development.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface iii

Introduction 1

Purpose of Study 2
Background of Study 2
Significance of Study 4

Methodology 5

Population and Sample 5
Instrumentation 6
Data Collection 7
Treatment of Survey Data 7

Results 8

Results Related to Objectives 8

Objective I.
Extent to Which Standards of Practice Are Used by Organizations Involved in Continuing Education 8

Objective II.
Extent to Which Organizations Involved in Continuing Education Perceive that Standards of Practice Enhance Quality Assurance in Continuing Education 12

Objective III.
Level of Satisfaction With the Current Status of Standards of Practice and Criteria for Practice in the Field of Continuing Education 12

Objective IV.
Extent to Which Organizations Involved in Continuing Education See a Need to Further Emphasize Individual Learner Performance in Standards of Practice as Opposed to the Process of Developing Educational Programs 21

Objective V.
Elements Most Frequently Addressed in Standards of Practice Currently Used by Organizations Involved in Continuing Education 27

Objective VI.
Frame of Reference for Developing Standards of Practice 30

Characteristics of Responding Organizations 30

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations 33

Summary of Findings 34
Conclusions 35
Recommendations 35
Frame of Reference for Developing Standards 37

Background 37
Proposed Frame of Reference 37
Format for the Frame of Reference 39
Key Points in the Proposed Frame of Reference 41

References 42

PREFACE

The Council on the Continuing Education Unit is interested in and concerned about effectiveness and quality in continuing education. One of the purposes of the Council is "to assist in strengthening educational and professional standards in the field of continuing education and training". In fulfilling this purpose the Council has been engaged in a major project over the past three years for the development of standards and criteria for good practice in continuing education. As a first step toward the development of standards of good practice for the field of continuing education research was conducted on the current status of standards in continuing education. This study, directed by Richard M. House, was conducted during calendar year 1982.

This summary of "Standards of Practice in Continuing Education: A Status Study" is presented to give interested persons an insight into the current status of standards of practice in continuing education and a recommended frame of reference for developing a set of standards that can be applied to the entire field of continuing education.

Leonard R. Brice
President
Council on the Continuing
Education Unit

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing so rapidly that individuals must live in several different worlds during their lifetimes. One generation can no longer pass along to the next generation what is needed to get along in the world. The recognition that no education can last a lifetime is changing the way our society thinks about education and learning. Education is now regarded as a continuous process and is needed in most every aspect of an adult's life. The opportunities for organized educational programs for adults have also increased. Many agencies whose primary purpose is not education have entered the educational arena. Employers are conducting on-the-job training for employees, workshops for professionals, and think-tanks for executives; travel agencies are adding educational components to packaged tours; professional associations are offering educational programs for their members; government agencies are providing more and more educational activities for staff members; and churches and museums are becoming more involved in continuing education programs.

The variety of organizations participating in continuing education reflects the increased emphasis on noncredit educational programs by adult learners. Cross (1982, p. 279) points out that over ten million participants registered in noncredit continuing education activities of colleges and universities during the year ending June 30, 1978. Likewise, the College Board estimates that noncredit learning activities sponsored by colleges will reach 20 million annually by the year 2000. Even so, the colleges and universities are serving a small portion of noncredit students. Adult learners go to non-school-based providers for formal instruction about three times more often than they go to school-based providers (Miller, 1980).

The great variety of continuing education providers and offerings poses problems for learners, employers, and others who must make decisions regarding the value of continuing education activities. Certain organizations, especially professional associations, have developed standards of practice as a means of enhancing quality assurance. However, they usually direct such standards more toward operational processes than to the assessment of learner outcomes. At the present time, a common set of standards and criteria for guiding the practice of continuing education does not exist.

The criteria and guidelines for use of the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) prepared by the Council on the Continuing Education Unit come closest to serving as a national guideline for the field of continuing education. This Council (CCEU) was organized in 1977 as a successor to the Task Force created in 1968 to develop the CEU. The mission of the Council is to refine and further the use of the CEU

and to "assist in strengthening educational and professional standards in the field of continuing education and training" (Criteria and Guidelines for Use of the Continuing Education Unit, 1979, p. 29). The establishment of the CCEU is particularly significant because it is a national continuing education organization, encompassing and pulling together the total field of providing agencies, organizations, and institutions. Thus, the Council provides an unmatched opportunity to study the current status of standards of practice, to make recommendations for improving standards of practice, and to facilitate the development and implementation of these improvements.

Purpose of Study

A major purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes toward standards of practice and the nature and scope of standards of practice as they currently exist in governmental agencies, professional associations and licensing agencies, business and industry, health-related organizations, and colleges and universities. A second purpose was to recommend a framework for the development of standards of practice for the field of Continuing Education.

Seeking answers to the following questions was basic to the foregoing purposes:

1. To what extent do organizations involved in continuing education use standards of practice?
2. Do organizations perceive that standards of practice will enhance quality assurance in continuing education?
3. To what extent are organizations involved in continuing education satisfied with the current status of standards of practice in the field?
4. To what extent do continuing education organizations see a need to further emphasize learner performance in standards of practice which are developed?
5. Which elements do the standards of practice currently used by organizations most frequently address?
6. What framework should be used in developing standards of practice for the field of continuing education?

Background of Study

Demographic, social, and technological changes during the last twenty years have been primarily responsible for the great emphasis we currently place on continuing education in our society. The following changes have all contributed directly or indirectly to an increased need for, as well as a demand for, quality assurance in continuing education.

- Demographical changes are resulting in a larger percentage of the population in the United States being adults.
- The linear life plan is giving way to a blended life plan where education is integrated with work and leisure activities throughout life.

- The educational level of the general population is rising.
- Job mobility is rapidly increasing among the work force.
- Adults are having more leisure time due to shorter work weeks and technological advances.
- Women are leaving the home in increasing numbers for vocational and social development.
- Equal opportunity for all segments of society, especially women, minorities, and older adults, is receiving more emphasis.
- Technological advances and an explosion of knowledge are resulting in rapid technological obsolescence.
- Businesses and industries have become increasingly concerned about and involved in responding to the learning needs of their employees.
- A massive infusion of funds is stimulating continuing education.
- The increasing professionalization of large numbers of occupations is further emphasizing continuing education.
- Continuing education is now mandatory for many professionals in order to maintain a license to practice.

Perhaps no single factor previously mentioned has had as much impact on the move to develop standards of practice in continuing education as the "continuing professional education" movement. This concept evolved in the 1960s and came into general usage in the late 1960s because the less formal means for professionals to keep up-to-date had not sufficed for present times (Houle, 1980). Prior to this time, the need for a professional to keep up was accepted as an individual obligation enforced by self-discipline and by sanctions applied by professional peers and the public served. A widespread attack on professions during the 1960s resulted in a new look at continuing education as a means of improving the substance and image of professional practice. More specifically, continuing education came to be viewed as a means of improving performance, disarming criticism, and building defenses against malpractice suits, loss of certification, and relicensure requirements (Houle, 1980).

The large infusion of federal funds for adult and continuing education and the dramatic increase in the number of professionals practicing in society during the 1960s resulted in demands during the late 1960s and 1970s for accountability in education and continuing competence for professionals. Prior to this time, it was assumed that the special competence required for a professional acquired prior to entering the profession combined with the voluntary advancement of knowledge or skills by professionals throughout their lives would result in continued competent practice. During the last fifteen years, this notion has been significantly modified. Many professions are now very concerned about ensuring continued professional competence. For the most part, professions have been unwilling to require that their members demonstrate competence in order to be relicensed or recertified to practice. Instead, they have turned to professional continuing education as a means of ensuring competence. Many professions have persuaded state legislatures to pass legislation requiring a certain number of hours of continuing education for

relicensure or recertification to practice. They argue that licensure and certification processes are used as a means of ensuring competent practice by requiring certain educational standards be met before a person is licensed or certified to practice. Continuing competence, it is argued, can be achieved by using these same processes to ensure that the professional continues to learn and stay informed by means of continuing education throughout his career.

The need for quality assurance in continuing education programs has resulted in attention being focused on the development of standards of practice for organizations involved in continuing education. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, several professional organizations developed standards of practice that were used to approve continuing education programs for which their members could receive continuing education credit required for relicensure. During this same time, educational institutions, government agencies, business and industry, and various other organizations involved in continuing education were realizing the need for some standardized way of measuring noncredit continuing education. In July of 1968, thirty-four national organizations from government, education, business, labor, and the professions attended a National Planning Conference on the Feasibility of a Uniform Crediting and Certification System for Continuing Education. Following this meeting, a National Task Force was created that subsequently developed and defined the concept of the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). One CEU was defined as "ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience, under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction" (Criteria and Guidelines for Use of the Continuing Education Unit, 1979).

The CEU was incorporated into Standard Nine on Special Activities by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1971. Most colleges and universities quickly adopted the use of the CEU, as did many businesses, professional associations, government agencies, and other organizations involved in continuing education.

Neither the standards of practice developed by certain professional associations for continuing education activities nor the CEU guidelines have been adequate to ensure adults pursuing continuing education that the activities they attend are high quality programs. This continuing concern for a common set of standards to guide the practice of continuing education for all providers forms the basis for this study. Given that demographic, social, and technological changes have forced continuing education into the spotlight, now is the time to be responsive to the need by reviewing current standards of practice and by establishing a conceptual framework that can be used to develop standards of practice for use by any organization involved in continuing education. When standards are available, widely accepted, and understood by providers of continuing education, licensing or accrediting organizations, and the general public, then the quality of continuing education programs will be enhanced.

Significance of Study

The widespread acceptance of the CEU by the various provider groups establishes a basis for the belief that these same providers can develop and implement standards

of practice as a means of enhancing quality assurance. Never before has any organization or group of organizations sought to determine (1) the feelings of provider groups regarding the use of standards in continuing education; (2) the extent to which standards are now being used by providers of continuing education; and (3) the nature and scope of standards that are currently being used in continuing education. Nor has any attempt been made to establish a conceptual framework that could guide the development of a general set of standards for use by all providers for continuing education.

The knowledge learned from this study will facilitate a better understanding of the current status of standards of practice in the field of continuing education. The study should also provide a basis for developing standards of practice that could be used by all providers of continuing education. Of particular significance is the fact that the Council on the Continuing Education Unit, an organization whose membership encompasses the total field of provider agencies, organizations, and institutions, is sponsoring this study. Thus, organizations in business and industry, educational institutions, professional associations, governmental agencies, and various other organizations all have a stake in the study. This should result in widespread dissemination of the knowledge gained from the study as well as an increased probability that recommendations resulting from the study will be implemented as a means of improving quality assurance in continuing education.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The population of interest in this study is quite diverse in nature, consisting of organizations in business and industry, governmental agencies, health and health-related organizations, professional societies, licensing and accrediting agencies, and colleges and universities that sponsor continuing education activities or approve those sponsored by other organizations. The total universe of this population is unknown since no list of all organizations involved in continuing education is available. However, it is safe to assume that the entire population would be well in excess of fifty thousand organizations.

A quota sampling technique was used to select 5000 of the above organizations for the survey. Simon (1978, p. 274) points out that this technique represents a very important nonrandom sampling method. It is similar to the stratified random sample except that each organization in the universe does not have the same chance of being chosen, and, therefore, the researcher cannot use statistical theory to estimate the accuracy of his results. In quota sampling, the researcher, based on his professional judgment or the judgment of a research committee, decides to include fixed numbers of persons or organizations from each category of interest in his study, hopefully in proportion to representation of the subgroups in the population at large. The following sample quotas were established for this study:

Business and Industry	2000
Government Agencies	600
Health and Health-related Organizations	700
Professional Societies/Licensing Agencies	800
Universities and Colleges	800
Other Continuing Education Providers (Religious Organizations, etc.)	100
TOTAL	5000

Instrumentation

In developing a survey instrument appropriate for this study, the researcher drew upon his review of the literature, especially those portions that dealt with standards developed in pharmacy, psychology, and certain other professional areas. In addition, he examined the instrument used in Andrews' research (1972), *Public Service in Higher Education: A Status Study of Accreditation in Adult and Continuing Education Programs*. Based on a review of the above information and related materials and the personal experience and professional judgment of the researcher, a survey instrument was developed.

To insure that the study treated areas of concern most relevant to the organizations sponsoring the research, an advisory committee was appointed to represent the Council on the Continuing Education Unit and the National University Continuing Education Association. The membership of the Committee follows: John R. Valley, Area Director, Research Projects, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey; Charles I. Sener, Director, Bell System Center for Technical Education, American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Lisle, Illinois; David R. Reyes-Guerra, Executive Director, Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology, New York, New York; and Hilton T. Bonniwell, Dean of Continuing Education, Mississippi State University. In addition, Dr. Grover Andrews and Dr. Louis Phillips served as co-investigators for the study and offered guidance and assistance.

The Advisory Committee was established to guide the research effort and to serve as expert judges in clarifying problems with the questionnaire and making recommendations about content validity and format. In an all-day meeting, the experts on the advisory committee exercised their combined judgments to confirm content validity for the instrument. Face validity was also established to ensure that the questions received honest and accurate responses—i.e., so that respondents could answer appropriately (assuming they possessed the information to do so).

The survey instrument was completely revised to reflect the changes recommended by the advisory committee. The second draft of the instrument was hand delivered to a group of 40 persons representing organizations that would be surveyed. Thirty-four (85%) of the instruments were completed and returned,

representing organizations in business, professional associations, licensing agencies, and colleges and universities. Follow-up personal interviews were conducted with nine persons who completed the questionnaire. The suggestions resulting from the pre-tests were incorporated into a final revision of the questionnaire.

Data Collection

The collection of data for this status study was by mail survey. The survey instrument was mailed to a total of 5000 organizations and institutions representing business and industry, government, the health field, professional societies and licensing agencies, and colleges and universities.

A letter was sent with the survey to directors of continuing education, professional development and training within these respective organizations, over the signature of the President of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and summarized what was requested from the respondents, namely that the questionnaire be completed and returned along with copies of standards, criteria, guidelines, or other descriptive materials regarding their continuing education activities.

More than 800 replies were received with 702 completing the survey in a usable manner. The distribution of replies according to organizational categories is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Survey Responses

Category	Usable Responses	Percent of Total
Business and Industry	124	18
Colleges and Universities	230	33
Government	108	15
Health	90	13
Professional Societies and Licensing Agencies	143	20
Other	7	1
TOTAL	702	100

Treatment of Survey Data

As the surveys were received, they were edited by the researcher and an editor, after which they were keypunched and the results were put on computer tape. A computer program, Statistical Analysis System, was selected that allowed unlimited analysis of the data through summary comparisons, frequency counts, and percentages based on the type of continuing education organization responding to some

43 different variables represented by the questions in the survey instrument. The composite responses for any type of organization, for example universities and colleges, provide a general picture of where this particular provider group stands in relation to attitudes about and uses of standards of practice in continuing education.

A content analysis was conducted on the standards, criteria, and guidelines received in order to determine the nature and scope of standards being used by providers of continuing education. Particular attention was given to the elements or areas addressed by the standards. A taxonomy, guided by the data found in the standards received, was developed for information contained in the standards. The content analysis of standards received provided some insight into what standards of practice actually address compared to what respondents say their standards address in their responses to survey questions.

RESULTS

The results of this study are based on data provided by 702 continuing education organizations representing business and industry, government, universities and colleges, health institutions, and professional societies and licensing agencies. The six objectives of the study provided the framework for analyzing and presenting the results in this chapter.

Results Related to Objectives

Objective I.
Extent to Which Standards of Practice Are Used by Organizations Involved in Continuing Education

Survey participants were asked if written standards and criteria for good practice in continuing education were used by their organizations in program development. Table 2 shows the frequency and percent of organizations using standards and criteria in continuing education programming. Of the 686 participants who responded to this question, 29.45 percent report that they always use written standards. Another 22.45 percent report frequent use of standards. Thus, less than 30 percent of the organizations report using standards and criteria on a routine basis, and almost one-half report using standards only occasionally or not at all in program development.

Figure 1 provides a distribution of responses by type of organization and portrays that health organizations report using standards on a systematic basis (always) far more often than other types of organizations (over one half of the health centers report that they always use standards). In contrast, less than one of three respondents from all other types of organizations involved in the survey report always using standards for program development in continuing education. If one interprets frequent use of standards to indicate regular use of them, then over three-fourths of the health organizations, slightly more than half of universities

Table 2. Organizations using standards and criteria in continuing education.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION Q8	STANDARDS USED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION?						
Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	6	TOTAL
Business	27	31	29	16	17	2	122
	3.94	4.52	4.23	2.33	2.48	0.29	17.78
	22.13	25.41	23.77	13.11	13.93	1.64	
	13.37	20.13	21.48	16.84	20.48	11.76	
Government	15	23	18	17	22	8	103
	2.19	3.35	2.62	2.48	3.21	1.17	15.01
	14.56	22.33	17.48	16.50	21.36	7.77	
	7.43	14.94	13.33	17.89	26.51	47.06	
Health Center & School	46	23	12	5	4	0	90
	6.71	3.35	1.75	0.73	0.58	0.00	13.12
	51.11	25.56	13.33	5.56	4.44	0.00	
	22.77	14.94	8.89	5.26	4.82	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	45	22	21	21	27	6	142
	6.56	3.21	3.06	3.06	3.94	0.87	20.70
	31.69	15.49	14.79	14.79	19.01	4.23	
	22.28	14.29	15.56	22.11	32.53	35.29	
University or College	69	55	55	36	13	1	229
	10.06	8.02	8.02	5.25	1.90	0.15	33.38
	30.13	24.02	24.02	15.72	5.68	0.44	
	34.16	35.71	40.74	37.89	15.66	5.88	
TOTAL	202	154	135	95	83	17	686
	29.45	22.45	19.68	13.85	12.10	2.48	100.00

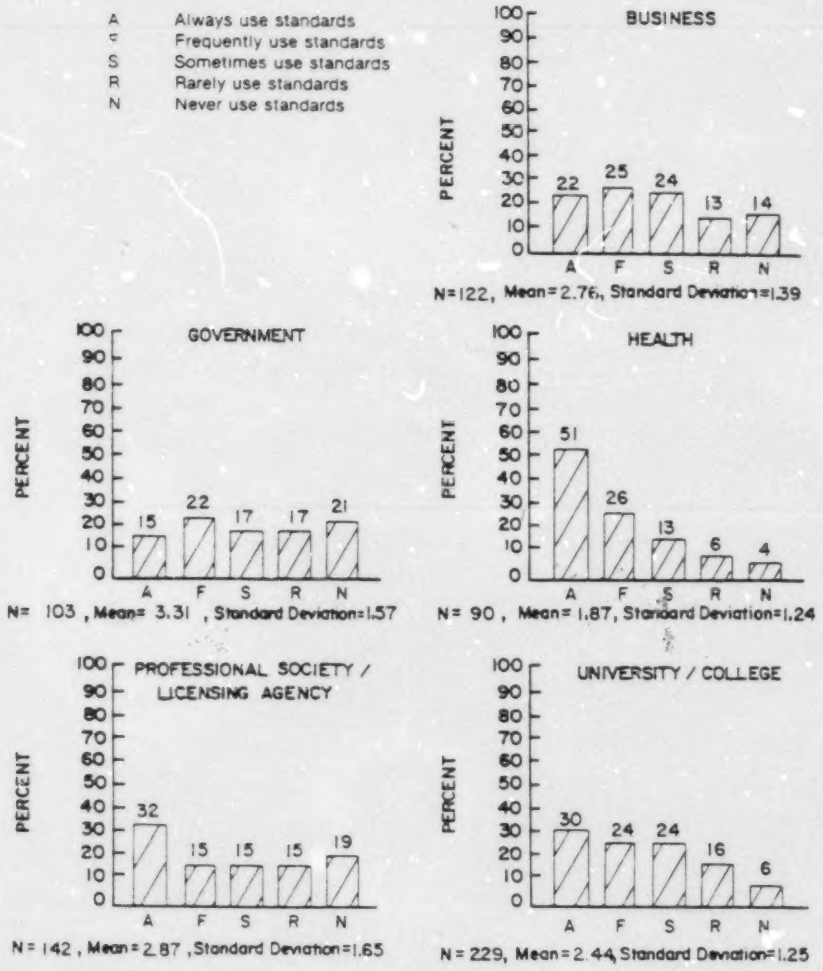

A Always use standards
F Frequently use standards
S Sometimes use standards
R Rarely use standards
N Never use standards
BUSINESS
PERCENT
22 25 24 13 14
A F S R N
N=122, Mean=2.76, Standard Deviation=1.39
GOVERNMENT
PERCENT
15 22 17 17 21
A F S R N
N= 103 , Mean= 3.31 , Standard Deviation=1.57
HEALTH
PERCENT
51 26 13 6 4
A F S R N
N= 90 , Mean= 1.87, Standard Deviation=1.24
PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY / LICENSING AGENCY
PERCENT
32 15 15 15 19
A F S R N
N= 142 , Mean= 2.87 , Standard Deviation=1.65
UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE
PERCENT
30 24 24 16 6
A F S R N
N = 229, Mean = 2.44, Standard Deviation=1.25

Figure 1. Use of standards in continuing education programming. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

and colleges, and less than one-half of the respondents from business, government, and professional societies/licensing agencies report regular use of standards in continuing education program development.

Additional insight regarding the extent to which standards of practice are used in continuing education can be gained by looking at the distribution of the mean responses for each type of organization responding to this part of the survey (Figure 2). The lower the mean value is in Figure 2, the more often written standards and criteria are used in continuing education programming. This graph shows that the mean response for health organizations falls between frequently and always using standards. In contrast, the mean response for governmental organizations lies between rarely and sometimes using standards, whereas the mean response for all other organizations falls between sometimes and frequently using standards in continuing education program development.

In summary, none of the organizational types has a high percentage of respondents who report using standards and criteria in continuing education program development. Only in the health field does a majority (51 percent) report that they always use written standards. For governmental organizations responding to the survey, only 15 percent report always using standards in continuing education program development. When considering the responses from the entire continuing education field included in the survey, only 29 percent report that they always use standards in program development, and only slightly over one-half report frequent use of written standards of practice.

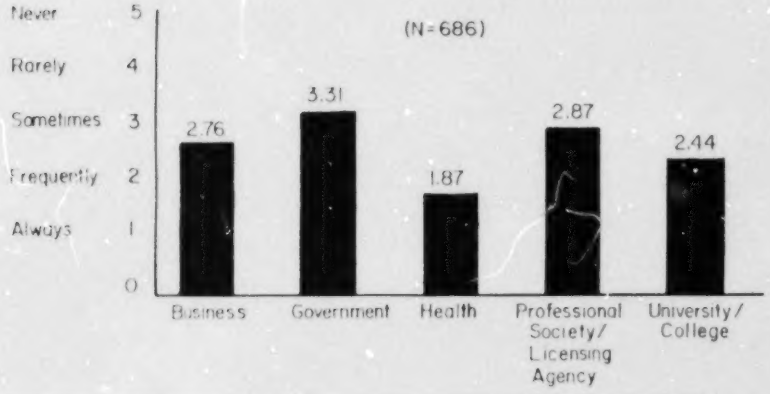


Figure 2. Use of standards in continuing education programming. Distribution of mean responses is by type of organization.

Objective II.
Extent to Which Organizations Involved in Continuing Education Perceive that Standards of Practice Enhance Quality Assurance in Continuing Education

Of the 695 persons responding to this part of the survey, almost 34 percent indicate strong agreement with the statement that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education. An additional 50 percent of the remaining responses indicate agreement. Some 13 percent are undecided and slightly over 3 percent disagree or strongly disagree with the assertion. Table 3 provides frequencies and percentages of responses related to the question of whether standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education.

Figure 3 presents the distribution of responses by organizational type. The percent of respondents strongly agreeing with the assertion that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education ranges from a low of 30 percent in universities and colleges to a high of 37 percent for health centers. The agree category ranges from a low of 45 percent in business to a high of 56 percent in universities and colleges. Only four persons from the business area strongly disagree with the statement. No respondents from the health field disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

By considering a distribution of the means of the responses by organizational type, one gains additional insight about the similiarity or dissimilarity of the responses. Figure 4, with its distribution of the means, reflects that the mean response for all organizational types is between agree and strongly agree. The health field reflects the strongest agreement with a mean of 1.74, while business reflects the lowest level of agreement with a mean of 1.97.

In summary, a high percentage of responses (84 percent) from all types of organizations agree that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education. Less than four percent of the respondents disagree with that assertion, while 13 percent are undecided.

Objective III.
Level of Satisfaction with the Current Status of Standards of Practice and Criteria for Practice in the Field of Continuing Education

In relationship to this objective, respondents were asked to state their level of satisfaction with the current status of standards and criteria for good practice in the field of continuing education. Of the 686 persons who responded to this part of the survey, less than one percent are very satisfied, whereas slightly more than one-fourth of the respondents report being satisfied. More than 38 percent of the respondents report that they are unsure, and slightly more than one-third report being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. Table 4 reflects frequencies and percentages of responses related to the level of satisfaction of respondents with the current status of standards for practice in continuing education.

Table 3. Reponse to statement that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION Q4	STANDARDS ENHANCE QUALITY ASSURANCE					
Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Business	42	56	19	2	5	124
	6.04	8.06	2.73	0.29	0.72	17.84
	33.87	45.16	15.32	1.61	4.03	
	17.95	16.05	21.35	11.11	100.00	
Government	38	50	17	3	0	108
	5.47	7.19	2.45	0.43	0.00	15.54
	35.19	46.30	15.74	2.78	0.00	
	16.24	14.33	19.10	16.67	0.00	
Health Center & School	33	47	10	0	0	90
	4.75	6.76	1.44	0.00	0.00	12.95
	36.67	52.22	11.11	0.00	0.00	
	14.10	13.47	11.24	0.00	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	52	68	15	8	0	143
	7.48	9.78	2.16	1.15	0.00	20.58
	36.36	47.55	10.49	5.59	0.00	
	22.22	19.48	16.85	44.44	0.00	
University or College	69	128	28	5	0	230
	9.93	18.42	4.03	0.72	0.00	33.09
	30.00	55.65	12.17	2.17	0.00	
	29.49	36.68	31.46	27.78	0.00	
TOTAL	234	349	89	18	5	695
	33.67	50.22	12.81	2.59	0.72	100.00

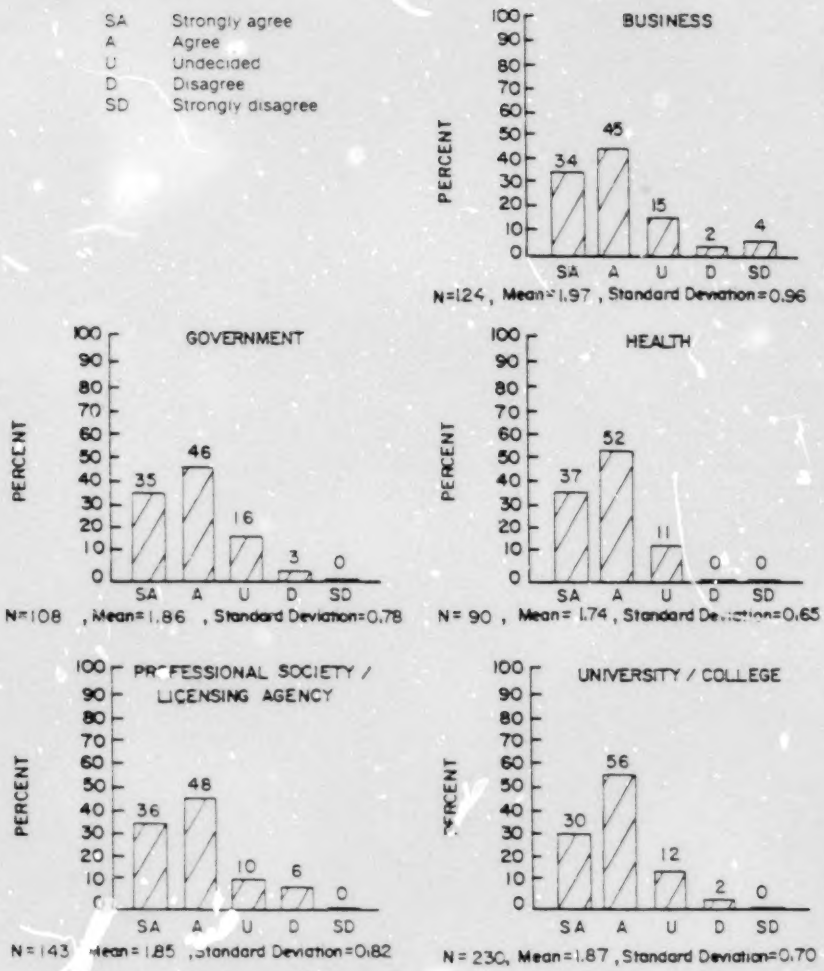


Figure 3. Agreement with statement that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

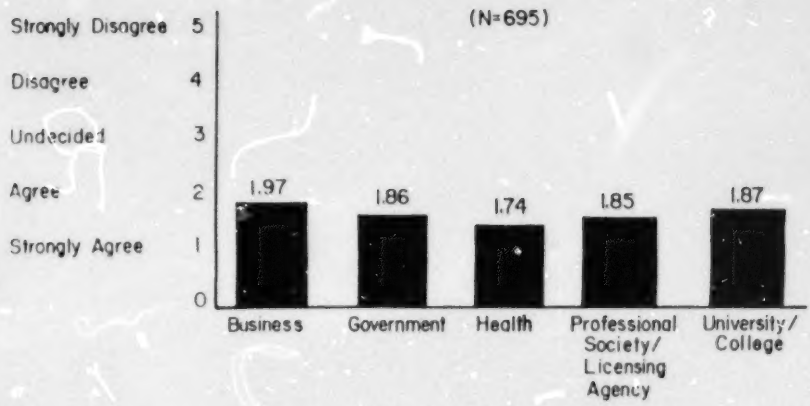


Figure 4. Agreement with statement that standards enhance quality assurance in continuing education. Distribution of mean responses is by type of organization.

In order to more easily compare responses of the different types of organizations, Figure 5 presents the distributions for all types of organizations involved in the survey. These graphs portray quite well the high degree of uncertainty of the respondents in judging their level of satisfaction with current standards of practice in continuing education. For all organizational types, the greatest percentage of responses is in the unsure category. For business and governmental organizations, more respondents are unsatisfied than satisfied. Contrarily, in the health field, more persons report being satisfied than unsatisfied with current standards. Professional societies and universities/colleges report about equal levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Figure 6 provides a distribution of the mean responses for each type of organization involved in the survey. The mean response for business, government, and professional societies/licensing agencies is between unsatisfied and unsure, whereas the mean responses for health organizations and universities/colleges barely reach the unsure level.

In summary, few respondents (less than 28 percent) report being satisfied with current standards of practice in continuing education. The remaining respondents are divided between being unsure (38 percent) and unsatisfied (34 percent).

Some additional insight may be gained about the current level of satisfaction with standards of practice in continuing education by looking at what respondents indicate about their levels of satisfaction with standards within their own organizations. In general, the respondents are much more positive about standards in their own organizations than about standards in the field as a whole. More than 59 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with their organization's standards for the practice of continuing education, as compared with 28 percent being satisfied or very

Table 4. Level of satisfaction with standards or practice for the field of continuing education.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION Q7	SATISFACTION WITH STANDARDS						
Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Unsure	Satistied	Very Satisfied	6	TOTAL
Business	6	43	49	23	3	0	124
	0.87	6.27	7.14	3.35	0.44	0.00	18.08
	4.84	34.68	39.52	18.55	2.42	0.00	
	26.09	20.57	18.77	12.43	50.00	0.00	
Government	4	33	50	19	0	0	106
	0.58	4.81	7.29	2.77	0.00	0.00	15.45
	3.77	31.13	47.17	17.92	0.00	0.00	
	17.39	15.79	19.16	10.27	0.00	0.00	
Health Center & School	4	22	34	29	1	0	90
	0.58	3.21	4.96	4.23	0.15	0.00	13.12
	4.44	24.44	37.78	32.22	1.11	0.00	
	17.39	10.53	13.03	15.68	16.67	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	4	40	53	40	1	0	138
	0.58	5.83	7.73	5.83	0.15	0.00	20.12
	2.90	28.99	38.41	28.99	0.72	0.00	
	17.39	19.14	20.31	21.62	16.67	0.00	
University or College	5	71	75	74	1	2	228
	0.73	10.35	10.93	10.79	0.15	0.29	33.24
	2.19	31.14	32.89	32.46	0.44	0.88	
	21.74	33.97	28.74	40.00	16.67	100.00	
TOTAL	23	209	261	185	6	2	686
	3.35	30.47	38.05	26.97	0.87	0.29	100.00

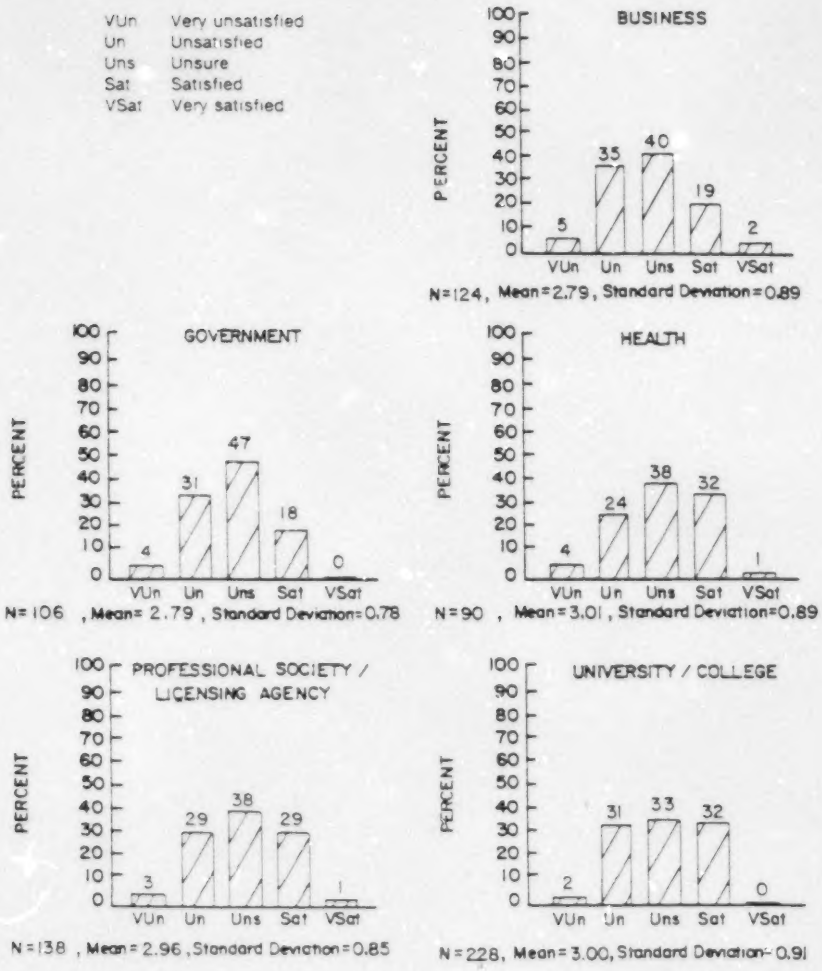


Figure 5. Level of satisfaction with current standards in the field of continuing education. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

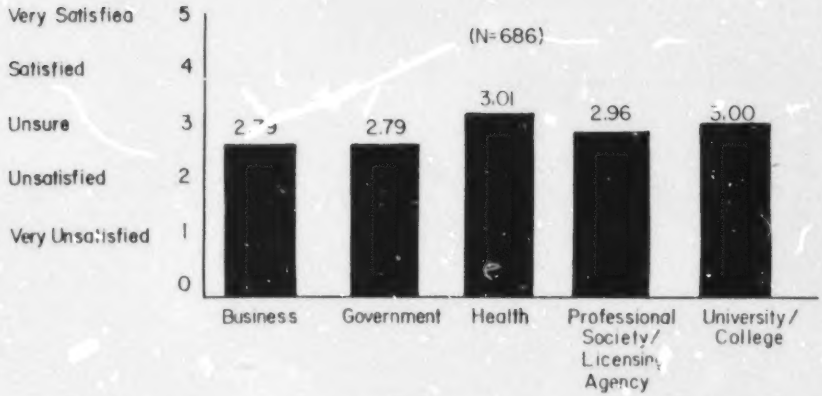


Figure 6. Level of satisfaction with standards of practice in the field of continuing education. Distribution of mean responses is by type of organization.

satisfied with standards for the general field. About 25 percent report being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with standards within their own organization, as compared to 34 percent being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with standards of practice for the field of continuing education. Table 5 shows the frequencies and percentages of responses regarding the level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education within the respondents' own organizations.

Figure 7 illustrates the respondents' levels of satisfaction with standards within their own organizations (based on percent and type of organization). For the responses from business and government, roughly half report being satisfied or very satisfied, while nearly one-third report being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied. For professional societies/licensing agencies, nearly six out of ten report being satisfied or very satisfied, whereas one-fourth indicated being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with standards of practice for continuing education within their own organizations. Respondents representing health centers and universities/colleges are more satisfied with their standards of practice for continuing education than are the other three groups. In the health group, more than 75 percent of the respondents report being satisfied or very satisfied with their standards, and 63 percent of the responses from universities/colleges report likewise. For each of these two types of organizations, roughly one out of five respondents report being unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the standards of practice for continuing education within their own organizations.

Figure 8 provides a distribution of the mean responses regarding the level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education within the respondents' own organizations. The mean response for all types of organizations involved in continuing education falls between being satisfied and unsure. Thus, all types of organizations in the survey are more satisfied with standards within their respective organizations for continuing education than they are with standards of

Table 5. Level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education within respondent's own organization.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION Q10 SATISFACTION WITH STANDARDS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Unsure	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	6	TOTAL
Business	12	26	20	41	21	0	120
	1.82	3.95	3.04	6.23	3.19	0.00	18.24
	10.00	21.67	16.67	34.17	17.50	0.00	
	32.43	20.63	19.42	12.89	29.58	0.00	
Government	4	27	17	40	6	1	95
	0.61	4.10	2.58	6.08	0.91	0.15	14.44
	4.21	28.42	17.89	42.11	6.32	1.05	
	10.81	21.43	16.50	12.58	8.45	33.33	
Health Center & School	4	11	7	55	11	0	88
	0.61	1.67	1.06	8.36	1.67	0.00	13.37
	4.55	12.50	7.95	62.50	12.50	0.00	
	10.81	8.73	6.80	17.30	15.49	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	6	26	23	64	11	2	132
	0.91	3.95	3.50	9.73	1.67	0.30	20.06
	4.55	19.70	17.42	48.48	8.33	1.52	
	16.22	20.63	22.33	20.13	15.49	66.67	
University or College	11	36	36	118	22	0	223
	1.67	5.47	5.47	17.93	3.34	0.00	33.89
	4.93	16.14	16.14	52.91	9.87	0.00	
	29.73	28.57	34.95	37.11	30.99	0.00	
TOTAL	37	126	103	318	71	3	658
	5.62	19.15	15.65	48.33	10.79	0.46	100.00

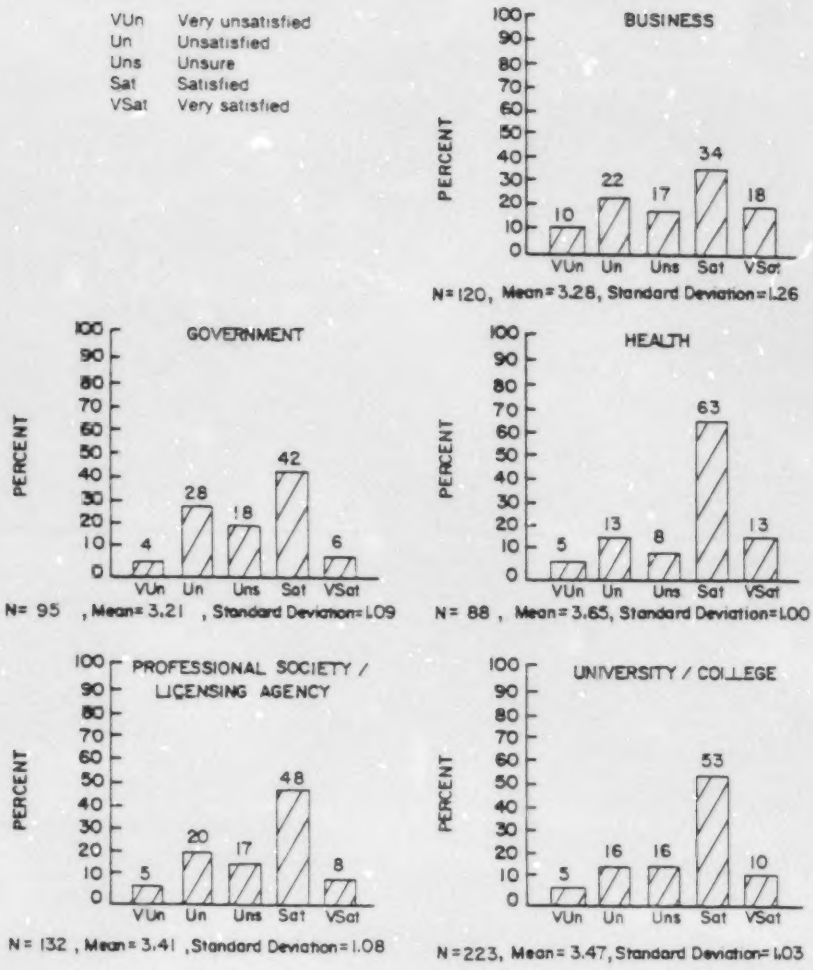


Figure 7. Level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education within respondents' own organizations. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

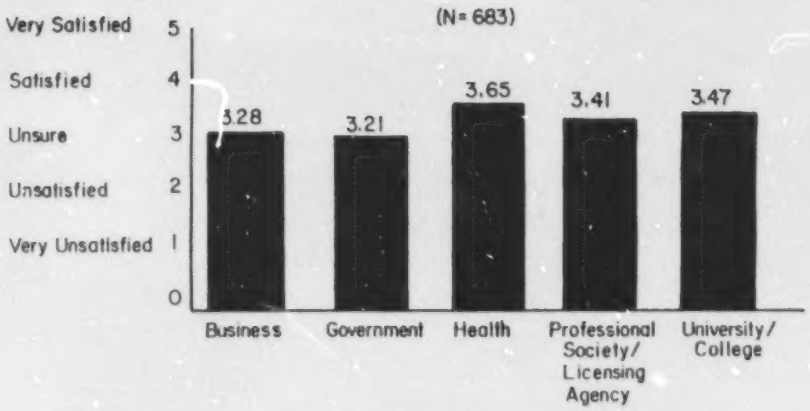


Figure 8. Level of satisfaction with standards of practice in continuing education within respondents' own organizations. Distribution of mean responses is by type of organization.

practice for the entire field of continuing education.

In summary, less than three of every ten respondents in the survey express satisfaction with standards of practice for the field of continuing education, and less than six out of every ten indicate they are satisfied with standards of practice for continuing education within their own organizations. The health organizations reflect the highest level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education both for the general field (33%) and for their own organizations (75%). On the other hand, governmental organizations express the lowest level of satisfaction with standards of practice for continuing education for the general field (18%) and for their respective organizations (48%). A much greater degree of uncertainty exists regarding the level of satisfaction for standards of practice in the general field of continuing education (38%) than for the level of satisfaction with standards within the respondents' own organizations (16%). By all indicators, the level of satisfaction with the current status of standards of practice in continuing education is quite low.

Objective IV.
Extent to Which Organizations Involved in Continuing Education See a Need to Further Emphasize Individual Learner Performance in Standards of Practice as Opposed to the Process of Developing Education Programs

In attempting to answer this question, the respondents were asked how much emphasis should be placed on developing standards for improving the performance of participants being trained. They were also asked how much emphasis should be placed on developing standards for improving the process of developing educational

programs. It was felt that a comparison of the responses to these two questions would let the researcher know if the respondents felt more emphasis in standards of practice should be placed on learner performance, both in general and relative to the emphasis being placed on educational process.

Tables 6 and 7 reflect the frequencies and percentages of responses to the above two questions. In reviewing these data, one notes that between 75 and 80 percent of all respondents want more emphasis in standards on both learner performance and educational process. Less than two percent want less emphasis in standards on either learner performance or educational process, and roughly 20 percent of the respondents feel the current emphasis is about right for learner performance and educational process.

A distribution of responses by type of organization responding is presented in Figures 9 and 10. Figure 9 shows a distribution of responses regarding the emphasis desired on learner performance in standards, whereas Figure 10 provides a distribution of responses related to emphasis desired on educational process.

These tables show a remarkably similar distribution for all organizational types. Between 75 percent (university/college) and 83 percent (health) of the respondents for each type of organization indicate a need for more emphasis on learner performance in standards of practice in continuing education (Figure 9). Responses from business and government indicate a greater need for more emphasis on learner performance than do the other types of organizations, especially professional societies/licensing agencies and universities/colleges, which seem a bit more satisfied with the current emphasis on learner performance in standards of practice.

Figure 10 is similar in pattern to Figure 9. Between 74 percent (health) and 80 percent (professional society/licensing agency) of those responding for each type of organization reflect a desire for more emphasis in standards of practice on educational processes. Roughly, 20 percent of the respondents for each type of organization indicate that the current level of emphasis on educational process is about right. Figures 9 and 10 show a strong need for more emphasis in standards of practice on both learner performance and educational process. In comparing these tables, one notes that universities/colleges and professional societies/licensing agencies express a slightly greater need for more emphasis on educational process than on learner performance. Contrarily, responses from health organizations, business and governmental agencies reflect a greater need for more emphasis in standards of practice for continuing education on learner performance than they do on educational process.

Based on Figures 9 and 10, the researcher is aware that distributions of the means will offer little additional insight since the mean response for each type of organization will be very close to two. This will be true in regard to learner performance and educational process. These tables indicate that the mean response for all types of organizations reflects a need to place more emphasis in standards of practice on both learner performance and educational process.

In summary, 79 percent of all respondents say that more emphasis in standards of practice for continuing education should be placed on learner performance. Likewise, 77 percent say that more emphasis in standards of practice for continuing

Table 6. Emphasis on learner performance in standards of practice for continuing education.*

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION	Q5	EMPHASIS ON STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE				
Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Much More	More	About The Same	Less	[illegible]	TOTAL
Business	38	63	20	2	0	123
	5.56	9.22	2.93	0.29	0.00	18.01
	30.89	51.22	16.26	1.63	0.00	
	25.85	15.95	14.93	33.33	0.00	
Government	28	57	16	2	0	103
	4.10	8.35	2.34	0.29	0.00	15.08
	27.18	55.34	15.53	1.94	0.00	
	19.05	14.43	11.94	33.33	0.00	
Health Center & School	19	56	15	0	0	90
	2.78	8.20	2.20	0.00	0.00	13.18
	21.11	62.22	16.67	0.00	0.00	
	12.93	14.18	11.19	0.00	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	25	85	31	0	0	141
	3.66	12.45	4.54	0.00	0.00	20.64
	17.73	60.28	21.99	0.00	0.00	
	17.01	21.52	23.13	0.00	0.00	
University or College	37	134	52	2	1	226
	5.42	19.62	7.61	0.29	0.15	33.09
	16.37	59.29	23.01	0.88	0.44	
	25.17	33.92	38.81	33.33	100.00	
TOTAL	147	395	134	6	1	683
	21.52	57.83	19.62	0.88	0.15	100.00

*No respondent indicates much less emphasis on learner performance.

Table 7. Emphasis on education process in standards of practice for continuing education.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION Q6	EMPHASIS ON STANDARDS FOR PROCESS						
Frequency Percent Row Percent Col Percent	Much More	More	About The Same	Less	Much Less	6	TOTAL
Business	33	58	28	1	2	0	122
	4.82	8.48	4.09	0.15	0.29	0.00	17.84
	27.05	47.54	22.95	0.82	1.64	0.00	
	21.15	15.63	19.44	12.50	66.67	0.00	
Government	18	60	23	2	0	1	104
	2.63	8.77	3.36	0.29	0.00	0.15	15.20
	17.31	57.69	22.12	1.92	0.00	0.96	
	11.54	16.17	15.97	25.00	0.00	50.00	
Health Center & School	19	48	21	2	0	0	90
	2.78	7.02	3.07	0.29	0.00	0.00	13.16
	21.11	53.33	23.33	2.22	0.00	0.00	
	12.18	12.94	14.58	25.00	0.00	0.00	
Prof Soc & Lic Agencies	31	81	27	1	0	0	140
	4.53	11.84	3.95	0.15	0.00	0.00	20.47
	22.14	57.86	19.29	0.71	0.00	0.00	
	19.87	21.83	18.75	12.50	0.00	0.00	
University or College	55	124	45	2	1	1	228
	8.04	18.13	6.58	0.29	0.15	0.15	33.33
	24.12	54.39	19.74	0.88	0.44	0.44	
	35.26	33.42	31.25	25.00	33.33	50.00	
TOTAL	156	371	144	8	3	2	684
	22.81	54.24	21.05	1.17	0.44	0.29	100.00

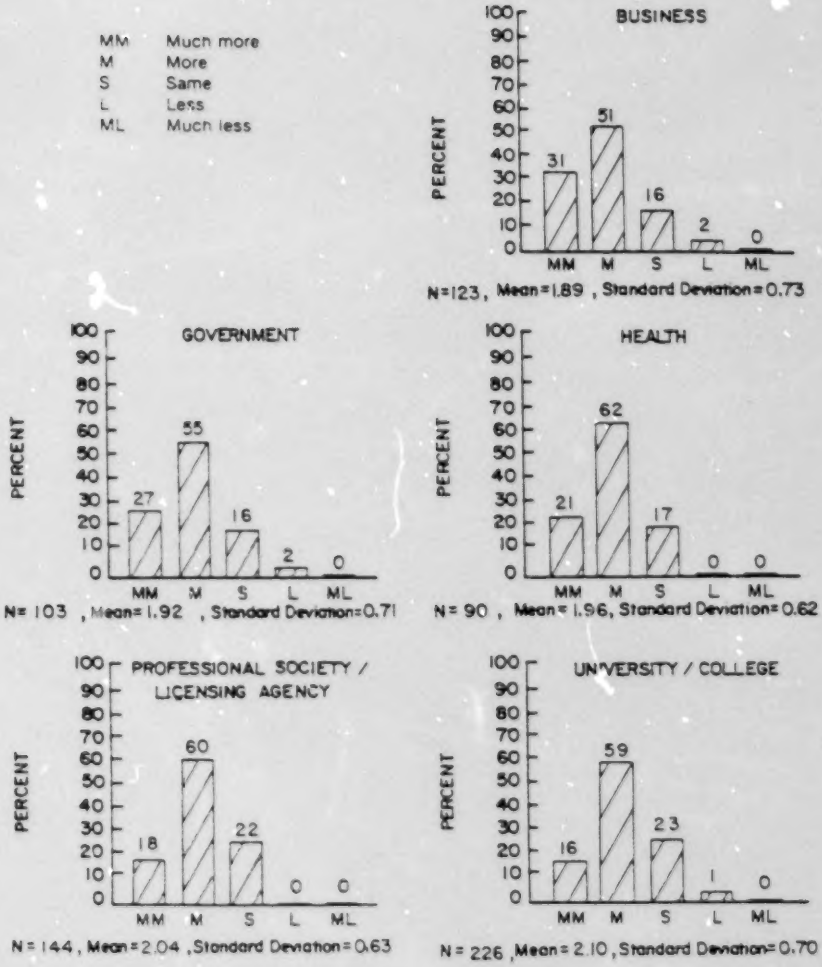


Figure 9. Emphasis in standards on learner performance. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

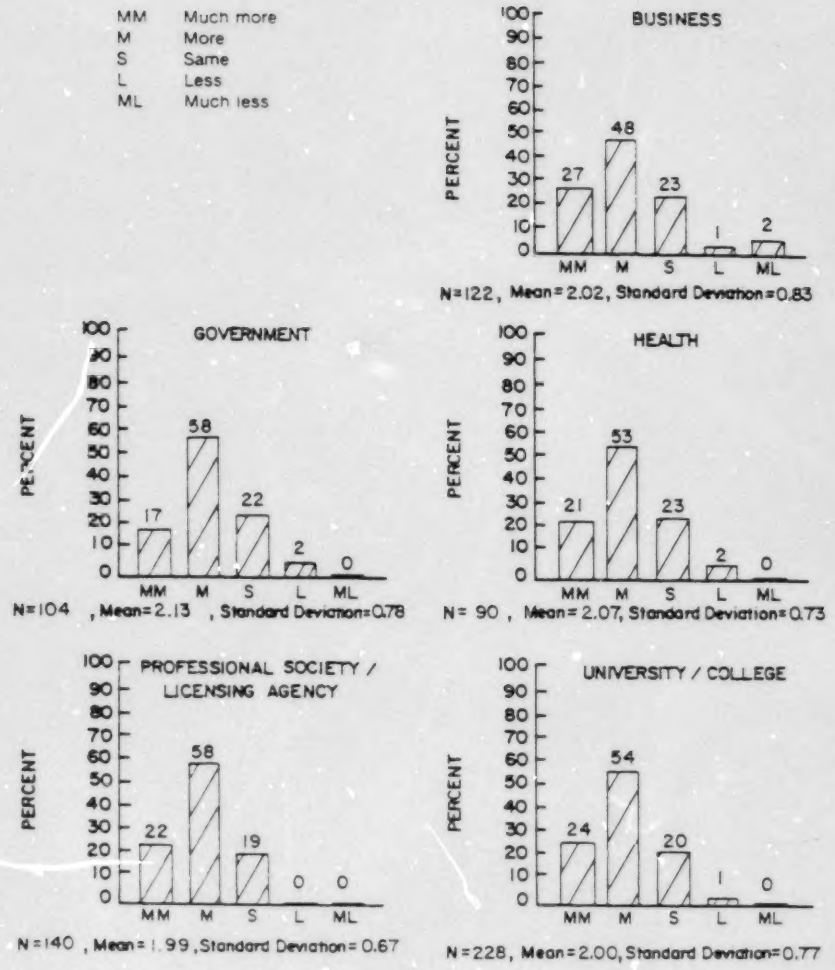


Figure 10. Emphasis in standards on educational process. Distribution of responses is by percent and type of organization.

education should be placed on educational process. Responses for health organizations, business and governmental agencies indicate a greater need to place more emphasis on learner performance than on educational process, whereas the reverse is true for those representing universities/colleges and professional societies/licensing agencies. Overall, a slightly greater need is expressec for emphasizing learner performance than educational processes in standards of practice for continuing education. However, the difference (2%) is too small to be of real concern since more than three of every four respondents express a need to place more emphasis in standards of practice on both learner performance and educational process.

Objective V.
Elements Most Frequently Addressed in Standards of Practice Currently Used by Organizations Involved in Continuing Education

For clarification, it should be pointed out that the researcher sought to answer this question only in a quantitative sense. Hence, he sought to determine what elements were addressed in standards and how often these elements were included in standards currently being used. The researcher did not attempt in this study to determine how adequately the elements were addressed. The qualitative aspect will be addressed by a project funded by the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. The results of this study will be used by the Council in its work.

Two approaches were used by the researcher in determining the elements most frequently addressed by current standards of practice in continuing education. First, survey participants were asked to indicate whether or not current standards addressed certain elements that the literature had indicated were most often found in standards. Second, a content analysis was done on the standards (criteria, guidelines, etc.) that survey participants submitted along with the survey instrument. In reviewing the materials submitted, it was determined that 31 percent of the 702 respondents referenced the use of standards. This compared quite well with the 29 percent in Objective II that report that they always use standards in continuing education program development. Further consistency was provided in that 69 percent of the health organizations have written references to standards used. This compared with 51 percent that report in the survey instrument that they always use standards in continuing education program development. Likewise, on the low side, 15 percent of the governmental agencies report in the survey that they always use standards and 17 percent provide documentation of standards used.

In considering the source of standards referenced by the respondents, the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is cited more often than all other sources combined. Sixty percent of all respondents referencing a source of standards cite the CEU. Some 32 percent cite one of the health professions, and the other eight percent represent a wide variety of other sources. Of those referencing the CEU, the distribution by type of organization is as follows:

Business	54%
Health	19%
Government	35%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	69%
University/College	95%

Thus, almost all references to standards from universities/colleges are to the CEU. The responses from businesses and the professional societies/licensing agencies also reflect strong usage of the CEU Guidelines. The health field references the CEU Guidelines very seldom, referring instead to standards of their various professional associations. References to standards in government most often are to standard operating procedures established in-house.

In order to determine the elements most frequently addressed by standards referenced by the respondents, the researcher selected 21 different sets of standards in addition to the CEU Guidelines for the content analysis. These represented over 90 percent of all standards cited by the respondents.

Figure 11 lists 16 elements directly addressed by standards referenced by one or more organizations involved in continuing education. The first ten elements are directly addressed by over 80 percent of the different sets of standards used by the reporting organizations. A majority of the different sets of standards used by reporting organizations also cover Elements XI, XIII, and XIV. In contrast, less than half of the standards referenced address course fees and refunds (XII). Likewise, less than 25 percent consider ethical conduct (XV) and less than 15 percent cover participant protection (XVI).

The survey instrument asked respondents to indicate whether they have written standards addressing selected topics. The responses are as follows:

Topic Addressed	Percent
Goals and Objectives	79
Participant Fees	48
Program Planning	52
Selection of Instructors	43
Evaluation of Instructors	61
Training of Instructors	48
Content Development	29
Program Evaluation	44
Records Maintenance	53
Publicizing Programs	33
Participant Enrollment	32
Ethical Conduct	27

In interpreting the responses above, one needs to keep in mind that only about 30 percent of all respondents provided materials referencing standards and about the same percentage (29%) indicate in the survey that they always use standards in continuing education practice. Considered in that light, the somewhat low percentages may reflect a good deal of consistency. That is, it appears that when organizations

Figure 11. Content analysis of current standards.

Elements Addressed in Standards and Criteria \ Organizations Represented	American Association for Respiratory Therapy	American College of Nursing Home Administrators	American Council on Pharmaceutical Education	American Dental Association	American Institute of Certified Public Accountants	American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers	American Medical Association	American Nurses Association	American Psychological Association	American Public Health Association	American Telephone and Telegraph	Association of Continuing Legal Education Administrators	Cone Mills Corporation	Council on Chiropractic Education	Council for Non-Collegiate Continuing Education	Engineers Council for Professional Development	National Association of Social Workers	National Council on Quality C.E. for Information, Library & Media Personnel	New Jersey School Board Association	United Cerebral Palsy Association	Virginia Department of Mental Health	CEU Guidelines
I. Administration and Organization	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
II. Goals and Objectives	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
III. Fiscal Resources		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*							*			
IV. Instructional Staff		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
V. Content Development		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
VI. Educational Methods/ Materials		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
VII. Participant Enrollment				*			*	*	*													
VIII. Educational Facilities				*			*	*	*													
IX. Program/Course Evaluation		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
X. Program/Course Publicity		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
XI. Program/Course Records		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
XII. Course Fees and Refunds																						
XIII. Satisfactory Completion of Educational Activity																						
XIV. Awarding Continuing Education Credit																						
XV. Ethical Conduct																						
XVI. Participant Protection																						

use standards, the standards tend to address the same basic elements or topics.

In comparing the elements most addressed in the content analysis of actual standards used with the ones identified in the survey instrument, the following 12 items stand out:

Administration and Organization
Goals and Objectives
Instructional Staff (selection, training and evaluation)
Program/Course Records
Program Planning (including educational methods, materials and facilities)
Fiscal Resources (including participant fees)
Program/Course Evaluation
Participant Enrollment
Program/Course Publicity
Content Development
Satisfactory Completion of and Awarding Credit for Educational Activities
Ethical Conduct

The similarity that exists between the items identified in the survey instrument and the ones found in the standards analyzed is to be expected, since a literature review of standards was used to obtain appropriate items to be included in the survey. However, it does appear from the content analysis and the survey responses that the above 12 elements are those most frequently addressed *and used* in standards of practice at the present time.

Objective VI.
Frame of Reference for Developing Standards of Practice

Because this frame of reference is a major product of this research and is to be based on the findings of the study, it will be discussed in the next chapter as a major recommendation. Before proceeding to the next chapter, other findings from the survey of the participants will be presented.

Characteristics of Responding Organizations

Organizations responding to this survey are characterized by beliefs that organizations involved in continuing education should have written standards and criteria, that most continuing education organizations do not currently use standards, and that there is a need to improve quality assurance in continuing education.

The opinions expressed by the respondents about the need for standards and their beliefs that they are not used very often at the present time may be based on their perception of the need to improve quality assurance in continuing education. Of the 702 respondents, 90 percent feel that there is a need to improve quality assurance in continuing education.

The organizations responding to the survey can be further characterized in the following ways. They tend to be more than five years old (67%), are subsystems in larger units (62%) and obtain their financial support primarily from participant fees (67%) and their in-house budgets (52%). These organizations tend to serve large numbers of participants, with the mean number served in 1981 being 7001 per organization and the total for all organizations served being almost 3,500,000. The instructional mode most often used by the organizations is face-to-face instruction (86%), and the training facilities most used are motels and conference centers (64%). Training needs are most frequently determined by surveying individuals (70%) and specific requests received (70%). The respondents report that most commonly their training programs are conducted for participants outside their organization (72%). Appropriate content is most often determined by subject matter specialists (57%). Achievement of learning objectives is most frequently measured by participant feedback (73%), as opposed to pre- and post-tests (36%) or job performance (24%). Satisfactory completion of training programs is reported to be determined more often from participant attendance (70%) rather than from change in knowledge (35%) or demonstrated ability to apply learning (37%). Only a small percentage (27%) of organizations responding report abiding by a written code of ethics.

A summary of characteristics by type of organization responding to the survey follows.

1. Participants served in 1981	Mean	Total
Business	4429	465,089
Government	8612	447,869
Health	4868	379,725
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	7302	701,064
University/College	8877	1,473,665
All Organizations	7001	3,465,412

2. Primary financial support	Participant Fees	Organizational Budget
Business	60%	47%
Government	28%	58%
Health	75%	72%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	64%	47%
University/College	87%	47%
All Organizations	67%	52%

3. Subsystems in larger units	
Business	50%
Government	52%
Health	76%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	49%
University/College	77%
All Organizations	62%

4. More than 5 years old

Business	67%
Government	49%
Health	74%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	63%
University/College	77%
All Organizations	67%

5. Instructional mode most used (face-to-face instruction)

Business	93%
Government	66%
Health	98%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	78%
University/College	92%
All Organizations	86%

6. Most frequent means used to determine needs

	Surveying Individuals	Specific Requests
Business	66%	73%
Government	57%	54%
Health	84%	78%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	64%	61%
University/College	76%	79%
All Organizations	70%	70%

7. Provide training for individuals and groups outside organizations

Business	69%
Government	55%
Health	86%
Professional/Society/Licensing Agency	51%
University/College	88%
All Organizations	72%

8. Training facilities most used (motels and conference centers)

Business	75%
Government	47%
Health	74%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	69%
University/College	60%
All Organizations	64%

9. Determine content by subject matter specialist

Business	47%
Government	40%
Health	72%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	44%
University/College	74%
All Organizations	57%

10. Measure achievement of learning objectives by	Participant Feedback	Pre- and Post-Test	Job Performance
Business	83%	33%	45%
Government	59%	35%	28%
Health	85%	56%	26%
Professional Society/ Licensing Agency	59%	24%	9%
University/College	80%	38%	19%
All Organizations	73%	36%	24%

11. Determine satisfactory completion by	Attendance	Knowledge Change	Ability To Apply
Business	60%	32%	32%
Government	56%	29%	22%
Health	85%	51%	40%
Professional Society/ Licensing Agency	65%	24%	16%
University/College	79%	41%	31%
All Organizations	70%	35%	37%

12. Adhere to written code of ethics	
Business	26%
Government	15%
Health	34%
Professional Society/Licensing Agency	23%
University/College	32%
All Organizations	27%

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to determine the current status of standards of practice in continuing education, including *attitudes* toward the use of standards, *actual use* of standards and *content* of standards being used; and (2) to establish a frame of reference for use by the Council on the Continuing Education Unit and other continuing education organizations in developing standards and criteria that will promote and improve quality assurance for the field of continuing education.

The population of interest in this study consisted of organizations in business and industry, governmental agencies, health and health-related organizations, professional societies, licensing and accrediting agencies, and universities and colleges that sponsor continuing education activities or approve those sponsored by other organizations. A quota sampling technique was used to select participants representing the above five groups for inclusion in the study. A total of 5000 organizations received a mailed questionnaire with no follow-up. More than 800 responses were returned with 702 of these being included in the analysis.

The data were analyzed descriptively by computer, providing frequency counts and percentages according to the forty-three characteristics contained in the survey. The computer program Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was used to generate the analysis of the data. Other important inputs to the study included the opinions of experts in the field who served on the research advisory committee, information from a search of the relevant literature, a content analysis of actual standards and other materials submitted by survey respondents, and the professional experience of the researcher in the field of adult and continuing education.

Summary of Findings

1. Only a small percentage of survey respondents (202 or 29 percent) *report that they routinely use written standards of practice in continuing education.* Only in the health field do more than 50 percent of the responding organizations report using written standards on a regular basis.
2. A high percentage of respondents (84%) *indicate agreement with the assertion that standards of practice enhance quality assurance in continuing education.*
3. Few organizations (only 191 or 28 percent of the survey respondents) *report being satisfied with current standards of practice in continuing education.*

4a. A high percentage of respondents from all types of organizations included in the survey *want more emphasis in standards on learner performance* (79 percent overall).

4b. A high percentage of respondents representing all types of continuing education organizations also *desire more emphasis in standards on educational process* (77 percent overall).

5. The following elements are most frequently found when performing a content analysis of standards submitted by respondents. The majority of these elements are also identified frequently by those responding to the survey. The literature review futher confirmed that these are the elements most often addressed in current standards and criteria for quality in continuing education.

    Administration and Organization
    Goals and Objectives
    Instructional Staff (selection, training, and evaluation)
    Program/Course Records
    Program Planning (including educational methods, materials, and facilities)
    Fiscal Resources (including participant fees)
    Program/Course Evaluation
    Participant Enrollment
    Program/Course Publicity
    Content Development
    Satisfactory Completion of and Awarding Credit for Educational Activities
    Ethical Conduct

6. A more comprehensive frame of reference is needed for developing standards and criteria for quality assurance in continuing education. The frame of reference that this researcher recommends is an open systems approach in which equal emphasis is placed on the continuing education system's inputs, processes, outputs and environment. The frame of reference should emphasize administrative as well as educational concerns in these areas.

Conclusions

It may be concluded from this study that continuing education organizations represented by business and industry, government, the health field, universities and colleges, and professional societies and licensing agencies currently do not routinely use written standards and criteria for quality assurance. Furthermore, they have a low level of satisfaction with standards that currently exist for the continuing education field.

Another conclusion is that representatives of continuing education organizations strongly believe that standards of practice will enhance quality assurance. Further, they feel that all continuing education organizations should have and use such standards.

A third conclusion is that more emphasis in standards of practice should be placed on learner performance and educational process as opposed to organizational inputs or resource requirements.

From the above, one can conclude that there is a need for the development of standards and criteria for quality assurance in continuing education. The responses to the survey, especially written comments, indicate that participants want the Council on the Continuing Education Unit to develop such standards for the field of continuing education.

Finally, based upon their responses to the survey, it may be concluded that while the various types of organizations involved in continuing education differ in their opinions to some extent, they reflect the same pattern of responses. Thus, the conclusions stated above are true for any organizational type (business, health, and so forth) included in the survey. The conclusions also hold true for the continuing education field as a whole as represented by these responses. This leads one to believe that some actions beneficial to all types of continuing education organizations can be taken to improve quality assurance.

Recommendations

Findings in this study of standards of practice in the field of continuing education in the United States suggest several recommendations for action and implementation.

1. It is recommended that a national organization respected by the various types of organizations involved in continuing education develop standards and

criteria for quality assurance in continuing education. Based on the response to this study and considering the fact that the Council is the only national organization whose membership is composed of continuing education providers representing business and industry, government, the health field, universities and colleges, professional societies and licensing agencies, it is recommended that the Council on the Continuing Education Unit assume the leadership role in developing standards and criteria for quality assurance in continuing education.

2. There is a need to have widespread involvement of continuing education providers in the actual development of standards and criteria. Therefore, it is recommended that specific representatives from several types of organizations involved in continuing education be appointed to participate in developing a draft of standards and criteria for quality assurance in continuing education. It is further recommended that continuing education organizations have opportunity, through some structured (field testing) process, to react to the proposed standards and to suggest changes, additions and so forth prior to such standards being recommended for implementation.

3. There is a need to offer continuing education organizations consultation and assistance in determining how well they measure up to standards and criteria for quality assurance once such standards are available. It is recommended that the national organization that takes the lead in developing standards and criteria also establish a mechanism to provide such consultation and assistance to continuing education providers in voluntarily improving the quality of their continuing education activities.

4. Since most continuing education organizations using written criteria or standards indicated that they use the CEU Guidelines (over 90 percent of universities and colleges), it is recommended that the Council on the Continuing Education Unit reexamine the criteria contained in the guidelines and make whatever changes may be appropriate, taking into account the results of this research project.

5. Since this study is the only one of its kind dealing with the status of standards of practice for the entire field of continuing education in the United States, it is recommended that the results receive widespread dissemination to practitioners, professional associations, policy makers, and the general public. The Council on the Continuing Education Unit that funded the research should take the lead in assuring widespread distribution of the results.

6. It is recommended that an open systems approach be used in developing standards and criteria for continuing education. More specifically, it is recommended that the frame of reference that follows be used in developing standards and criteria for quality assurance in continuing education.

Frame of Reference for Developing Standards

Background

There is a need to use a systematic and comprehensive approach to developing standards and criteria for continuing education practice. The three major components of any system, including an open social system such as a continuing education organization, are inputs, processes, and outputs. Thus, if one is interested in quality assurance for the work of the system, quality control mechanisms must be emphasized for all three components.

The frame of reference should place increased emphasis on the outcomes-component of the system. In analyzing existing standards, one notes that inputs (qualified staff, educational facilities, and so forth) are heavily emphasized. To a lesser degree process is emphasized, usually addressing a series of steps in the program planning process. Contrarily, the attention given to outcomes is quite limited.

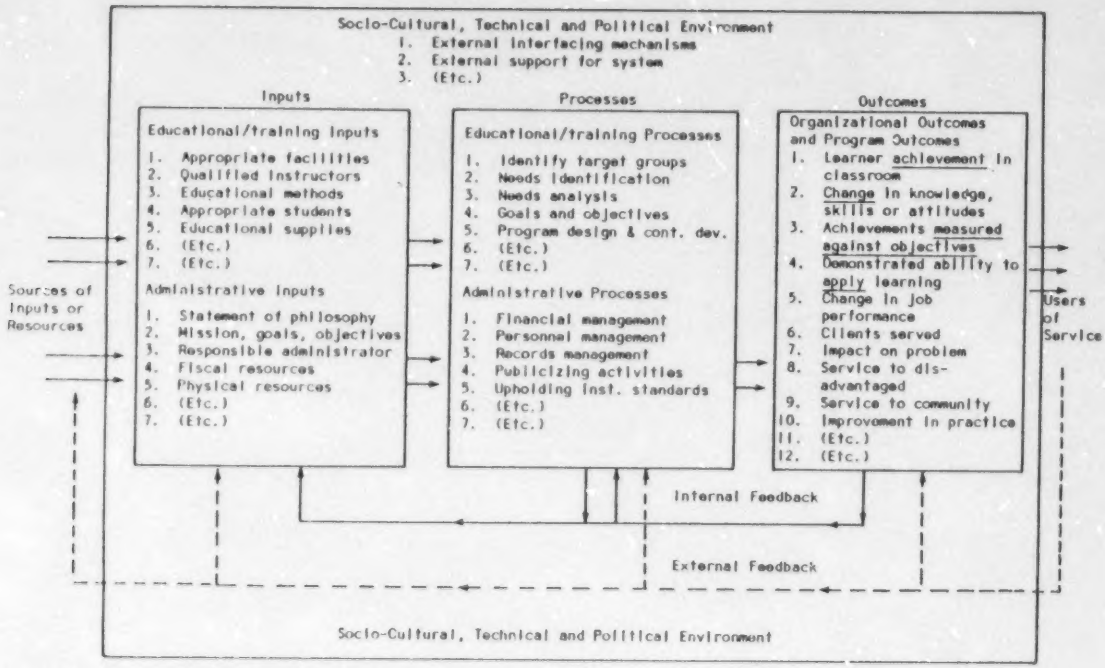
The importance of both administrative and educational inputs and processes needs to be emphasized in the frame of reference for continuing education. In fact, the research review committee suggested that the three broad categories for which standards need to be developed are *administration*, *education/training* and *outcomes*. Whether one is viewing a manufacturing plant, a university or a continuing education provider, the need for strong and complementary administrative and technical components is obvious.

The general environment in which the continuing education organization resides plays a crucial role in determining the quality of services provided. The survey results indicate that 62 percent of all organizations responding are subsystems in larger units. The institutional environment and the general external environment may enhance or inhibit quality programming in continuing education. Thus, in considering a frame of reference for developing standards and criteria for quality in continuing education, special attention needs to be given to the environment.

The format used to develop standards should establish the principles being addressed and provide illustrations of criteria related to the principles. Little support exists among the providers of continuing education for a super-structure to certify or approve continuing education organizations based on a specific set of criteria. In fact, this study grew out of opposition to such a move. Since the emphasis is to be on self-improvement, the organizations need help in assessing their own operations. The format recommended will meet the needs of the individual providers as well as those accrediting organizations already in existence, which may use the standards in accrediting continuing education providers.

Proposed Frame of Reference

The frame of reference proposed by the researcher for developing standards of practice for continuing education is graphically depicted in Figure 12. It suggests that a systematic approach be used and that standards be written to address inputs, processes, outcomes, and the general environment for continuing education organizations. Further, the model stresses that standards be established for the three



*Criteria for quality should be developed for inputs (educational and administrative), processes (educational and administrative) and outcomes (program and organizational). It is not necessary to have a clear separation between administrative and educational inputs or administrative and educational processes. They are separated here to place emphasis on each of them. Furthermore, it is expected that a criteria for quality may include only one dimension such as input, process or outcome or the standard may be written so as to include all three dimensions in the same statement.

Figure 12. Diagram of an open systems frame of reference for developing standards and criteria for quality in continuing education.*

broad areas of education/training, administration, and outcomes, as suggested by the review panel and advisory committee for the study.

Basically, the frame of reference reflects that educational/training and administrative resources (inputs) are used for organizational processes (educational/training and administrative) to produce the desired organizational, program, and learner outcomes. Each major element in the model is important in helping the organization achieve quality in continuing education programming. For example, with inadequate administrative resources (inputs), there is a poor chance that high quality outcomes can be achieved even if the educational/training resources and the administrative and education/training processes are more than adequate.

The topical areas included in the model are examples only and are not intended to be items that those writing standards would necessarily address. Nor is the list for any category intended to be comprehensive in nature. Finally, the distinction between education/training and administration, both in terms of resources (inputs) needed and processes, may be more blurred than definitive. The important point is that resources (inputs) that are required are important both for administration and education/training. Likewise, both educational and administrative processes are important in producing desired program and organizational outcomes.

Format for the Frame of Reference

Regarding format, it is recommended that standards be developed under the following board areas:

I. General Environment
II. Administration (Resources and Processes)
III. Education/training (Resources and Processes)
IV. Outcomes (Programmatic and Organizational)

For each of these areas, it is recommended that a series of standards or statements of principle be developed. Under each principle, criteria related to the principle should be presented. The criteria should enable continuing education staff or others to assess the extent to which the organization's performance is consistent with the stated principle. Table 8 provides a suggested format for purposes of illustration.

The principles stated and related criteria are expected to be relevant for all types of organizations involved in continuing education. However, professional judgment will be required to determine how the principles and criteria should relate to a particular continuing education organization. For example, a university might not have as one of its outcomes that participants will document a change in their professional practice. On the other hand, a business, which can easily monitor on-the-job performance, may have as an outcome a change in job performance for continuing education participants. However, in each case, expected outcomes should be specified prior to the conduct of the training programs.

Table 8. Suggested format for writing standards and related criteria for quality in continuing education.

STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR QUALITY IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

I. General Environment

A. Statement of Principle and Rationale

1. Criterion related to principle
2. Criterion related to principle
3. (Continue with other criteria related to principle.)

B. (Continue with other statements of principle and related criteria for general environment.)

II. Administration (Resources and Processes)

A. Statement of Principle and Rationale

1. Criterion related to principle
2. Criterion related to principle
3. (Continue with other criteria related to principle.)

B. (Continue with other statements of principle and related criteria for administration.)

III. Education/training (Resources and Processes)

A. Statement of Principle and Rationale

1. Criterion related to principle
2. Criterion related to principle
3. (Continue with other criteria related to principle.)

B. (Continue with other statements of principle and related criteria for education/training.)

IV. Outcomes (Programmatic and Organizational)

A. Statement of Principle and Rationale

1. Criterion related to principle
2. Criterion related to principle
3. (Continue with other criteria related to principle.)

B. (Continue with other statements of principle and related criteria for outcomes.)

In order to develop standards that have meaning for all types of continuing education providers, the principles and criteria will necessarily be general in nature. For example, standards and criteria will not specify degrees and training expected for instructors. Instead, the general principle that instructors should be qualified for the topic being addressed will be emphasized. Professional judgment must be used to determine what background and experience an instructor needs to teach a given subject or content area.

Standards developed with this frame of reference will enable all continuing education providers to know what authorities in the continuing education field as a whole believe are important principles and criteria related to quality in continuing education programming. It is anticipated by the researcher that such standards and criteria will promote voluntary compliance in order to enhance quality assurance in continuing education.

Key Points in Proposed Frame of Reference

1. A systems approach is used with equal emphasis placed on inputs (administrative and educational/training), processes (administrative and educational/training), and outcomes (programmatic and organizational).
2. Considerably more emphasis is placed on outcomes and processes than exist in current standards.
3. Both administration and education/training are emphasized. Desirable outcomes depend on appropriate inputs and processes in both areas.
4. The importance of the external environment is recognized. Systematic linkages are required to provide for organizational renewal.
5. Principles and related criteria are stated in relation to four major categories: Environment, Administration, Education/training, Outcomes. These statements will enable an organization to assess itself to determine how well it meets the criteria for quality in continuing education. Accrediting organizations will also be able to use the principles and criteria to evaluate continuing education organizations.

REFERENCES

American Council on Pharmaceutical Education. *Continuing Education Provider Approval Program.* Chicago: American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, 1976.

American Nurses' Association. *Accreditation of Continuing Education in Nursing.* Kansas City, Missouri: American Nurses' Association, 1975.

———. *Standards for Continuing Education in Nursing.* Kansas City, Missouri: American Nurses' Association, 1975.

Andrews, G. J. "Public service in higher education: A status study of accreditation in adult and continuing education programs." Ed.D. dissertation, Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University at Raleigh. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972.

Aslanian, C. B., and Brickell, H. M. *Americans in Transition: Life Changes as Reasons for Adult Learning.* New York: Future Directions for a Learning Society, College Board, 1980.

Berelson, Bernard. *Content Analysis in Communications Research.* New York: The Free Press, 1952.

Boaz, R. L. "Participation in Adult Education, Final Report 1975." Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1978.

Caplan, R. M. "Measuring the Effectiveness of Continuing Medical Education." *J. Medical Education* 48 (1973): 1150-1152.

Carp, A.; Peterson, R.; and Roelfs, P. "Adult Learning Interests and Experiences." *In Planning Non-Traditional Programs: An Analysis of the Issues for Postsecondary Education.* K. P. Cross, J. P. R. Valley, and Associates. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974.

Council on the Continuing Education Unit. *The Importance of Quality in the CEU.* Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. Edited by G. A. Medick. Memphis, Tennessee; June 12-13, 1980.

———. *Quality Assurance for Continuing Education Providers.* Proceedings of the Third Annual Conference of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. Chicago, Illinois; June 5-6, 1981.

Criteria and Guidelines for Use of the Continuing Education Unit. Prepared by the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. Silver Spring, Maryland; April 1979.

Cross, K. Patricia. *Adults as Learners.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982.

Denzin, Norman K. *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods.* New York: McGraw Hill, 1978.

Frandson, P. E. "Continuing Education for the Professions." In *Serving Personal and Community Needs through Adult Education,* pp. 61-81. Edited by E. J. Boone, R. W. Shearon, and E. E. White. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980.

Golden, Martin. "The Responsibilities of the Boards in Continuing Education." *American Journal of Pharmacy Education* 42 (1978): 414-415.

Golladay, M. A. "The Condition of Education: A Statistical Report on the Condition of Education in the United States." Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1976.

Green, Lawrence W., and Lewis, Francis Marcus. "Issues in Relating Evaluation to Theory, Policy, and Practice in Continuing Education and Health Education." *Mobius* 1 (April 1981): 46-58.

Grussing, Paul G. "Mandatory Public Relicensure Examinations: Alternatives and Recommendations." *American Journal of Pharmacy Education* 43 (1979): 244-249.

Hanson, Alan L. "Use of 'Standards of Practice' in the Design and Evaluation of a Continuing Education Program." *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 45 (February 1981): 56-60.

Harrington, Fred. "Continuing Professional Education—An Outside View." *Continuum* 41 (June 1977): 4.

Houle, Cyril O. *Continuing Learning in the Professions.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1980.

Johnstone, J. W., and Rivera, R. J. *Volunteers for Learning.* Chicago: Aldine, 1965.

Katz, Daniel, and Kahn, Robert L. *The Social Psychology of Organizations.* 2nd ed. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978.

Kemp, F. B. "Noncredit Activities in Institutions of Higher Education for the Year Ending June 30, 1976." Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 1978.

Knowles, Malcolm S. *A History of the Adult Education Movement in the United States.* New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1977.

Kreitlow, Burton W., and others. *Examining Controversies in Adult Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1981.

Laxdal, O. E.; Jennett, P. A.; Wilson, T. W.; and Salisbury, G. M. "Improving Physician Performance by Continuing Medical Education." *Can. Med. Assn. J.* 118 (1978): 1051-1058.

Leaman, David L. "Continuing Professional Development: The Ultimate Engineering Investment." *Professional Engineer* 49 (October 1979): 34-35.

Liddle, Edward M., and Dixon, Nancy. "Continuing Competency: The Newest Challenge in Health Care." *Journal of Optometric Education* 5 (Spring 1980): 8-10.

Loomis, C. P. *Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change.* Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1960.

Long, H. B., and Lord, C. B. "The Continuing Education Unit: Concept, Issues, and Use." Athens: University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education, 1978.

Mattran, Kenneth J. "Mandatory Education Increases Professional Competence." In *Examining Controversies in Adult Education*, pp. 46-51. B. W. Kreitlow and others. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981.

Mergener, Michael A. "The Effect of Continuing Education on the Test Scores of a State Licensing Board Examination." *Mobius* 1 (July 1981): 12-16.

Miller, Ronald H. "Future Directions for a Learning Society." In *The Importance of Quality in the CEU.* Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the Council on the Continuing Education Unit. Edited by G. A. Medick. Memphis, Tennessee; June 12-13, 1980.

National Center for Education Statistics. "Preliminary Data, Participation in Adult Education." Washington, DC: 1978.

Nowlen, Phillip. "Continuing Education for the Professions." *Continuum* 41 (June 1977): 8-11.

Patton, Carole, ed. "Continuing Professional Competence Issues Escalate for Engineering Community; Montana Enacts Competency Legislation." *Professional Engineer* 49 (July 1979): 12-14.

Pullin, Diana. "Minimum Competency Testing and the Demand for Accountability." *Phi Delta Kappan* 63 (September 1981): 20-22.

Rockhill, Kathleen. "Professional Education Should Not Be Mandatory." In *Examining Controversies in Adult Education*, pp. 52-70. B. W. Kreitlow and others. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1981.

Schlegel, John F. "Competency Assessment and Continuing Education." *American Journal of Pharmacy Education* 42 (November 1978): 403-405.

Selltiz, C. M.; Wrightsman, L. S.; and Cook, S. W. *Research Methods in Social Relations*. 3rd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1976.

Simon, Julian L. *Basic Research Methods in Social Science*. New York: Random House, 1978.

Smith, Roxie R. "Quality in Continuing Pharmaceutical Education." *Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years* 4 (June 1981): 4, 6, 24.

Sovie, Margaret D. "Continuing Competence and Relicensure." *Journal of the American College Health Association* 28 (December 1979): 150-154.

Stein, Leonard S. "The Effectiveness of Continuing Medical Education: Eight Research Reports." *Journal of Medical Education* 56 (February 1981): 103-110.

Stern, Milton R. "Universities in Continuing Education." In *Power and Conflict in Continuing Education*, pp. 4-35. Edited by P. E. Frandson. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1980.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. "Educational Attainment in the United States: March 1977 and 1976." Current Population Reports, Series P-20, No. 314. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977a.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. "Social Indicators 1976." Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977b.

Watkins, Beverly T. "Doubt about Wisdom of Requirements Slows Continuing Education Movement." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 24 (June 1982): 16.